

Message Text

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43

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /061 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8094

INFO COMUSFORAZ LAJES AB

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5275

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAIR, PO

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - TWA ACCESS TO AZORES

REF: LISBON 4962

1. ECONOMIC COUNSELOR AND I MET AUGUST 4 WITH TAP PRESIDNET JOSE MAGALHAES GOMES MOTA AND TAP COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR JOSE VELOSO LUCAS TO DISCUSS REF SUBJECT. I EXPRESSED MY CONCERN THAT CAB, WHICH IS INDEPENDENT USG AGENCY, MIGHT PROHIBIT TAP FLIGHTS OPERATING AT LAJES FROM LANDING IN U.S. IF THIS ISSUE IS NOT PROMPTLY RESOLVED. AFTER LENGTHY DISCUSSION OF OUR DIVERGENT VIEWS, GOMES MOTA ASSERTED THAT DISCUSSIONS COULD CONTINUE INDEFINITELY. IN EFFECT, HE MAINTAINED, QUESTION MUST BE RESOLVED BY OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS ON POLITICAL GROUNDS. TO HELP ACHIEVE SUCH A RESOLUTION, HE PROMISED TO CONCLUDE, BY THE END OF AUGUST, A THOROUGH STUDY OF TAP'S POSITION IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC MARKET, INCLUDING LAJES. TAP IS DEBATING WHETHER TO CONTRACT ITS SERVICES OR TO ADOPT AGGRESSIVE POSITION IN THAT MARKET, WHERE IT IS LOSING APPROXIMATELY \$15 MILLION PER YEAR. STUDY WILL, AS PART OF ITS OBJECTIVE, TRY TO QUANTIFY FINANCIAL IMPACT OF TWA ACCESS TO LAJES AND, THEREBY, CONTRIBUTE TO FORMULATION OF COMPANY'S RECOMMENDATION TO GOP ON LAJES ISSUE. HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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HE CLAIMED, FINAL DECISION ON LAJES RESTS WITH GOP RATHER

THAN TAP.

2. ECONOMIC COUNSELOR DISCUSSED SUBSTANCE OF PARAGRAPH 1 WITH LOCAL TWA REP ON AUGUST 5. LATTER EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT, INDICATING THAT HE WOULD PASS THIS INFORMATION TO HIS PRINCIPALS IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH GOMES MOTA DOWGRADED IMPORTANCE OF TAP INFLUENCE ON GOP POSITION, WE FEEL COMPANY'S RECOMMENDATION WILL BE DECISIVE. WE BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT USG SHOULD NOT CURB TAP FLIGHTS FROM LAJES TO THE U.S. UNTIL WE HAVE SEEN STUDY'S CONCLUSIONS, PRESUMING THEY ARE AVAILABLE BY EARLY SEPTEMBER.
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